

Park and Recreation Advisory Committee Meeting

April 21, 2009

5:30 pm

Olivet Oakbrook

Meeting Summary

Committee Members Present – M. Zuber, R. Epler, R. DeGroote, E. Schlegel, O. Smith, Chair – 5.

Others Present – S. Katzenmoyer, Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm.

Minutes

During review of the minutes, Mr. Schlegel requested removal of the sentence “Mr. Schlegel suggested that the Committee choose a field to become a softball field so that he can begin working on scheduling tournaments.” as he did not recall making that statement.

Motion was made by Rich DeGroote, seconded by Ernie Schlegel, to approve the March 17, 2009 minutes as corrected. Motion carried unanimously.

Report from Recreation Director

Mr. Zuber reported:

- Attendance at the recreation centers has begun to decrease as activities move outdoors. He stated that the Kids’ Café is still operating at full capacity and the centers are used after dark.
- Interviews for playground leaders continue.
- Baer Park is 99% complete. A walk-through will be conducted on May 6. No problems are expected. Mr. DeGroote noted that the children are already utilizing the equipment.
- The improvements to Essig and 3rd & Spring playgrounds will be slightly delayed as personnel issues have developed at DCNR. He noted that responses to bids have increased.
- Funding is available for improvements to Northmont playground.
- Barbey playground will be rehabilitated in 2010.
- A tennis tournament was held with 150 participants. \$3000 was donated to the program by Walmart. Participants received a tee shirt and lunch. Mr. Zuber expressed his thanks to Matt Lubas and Fromuth Tennis.
- The Parks and Recreation departments will be participating in a program through the federal stimulus package to create jobs. The program will be coordinated

- through Career Link. \$1 million is available and the City will receive 30 workers to assist with grass-cutting, maintenance, etc. Interested parties should apply at Career Link.
- There will be access to the ball fields at Angelica when they are not in use by Alvernia. Mr. Lubas is working with Alvernia on this issue. Discussions include rental fees, possibly \$100 plus a deposit to rent. The dedication ceremony was recently held.

Mr. Schlegel stated his belief that the stimulus program is an excellent idea.

Mr. Schlegel also stated his belief that the \$100 rental fee for Angelica is possible if the fee includes an umpire. Mr. Zuber stated that this fee is meant to control the groups who use the field. Mr. DeGroote suggested locking the gates to keep pick up games and those not paying to use the field out.

Mr. Schlegel stated his belief that the security/park rangers would assist with finding groups using fields and parks who do not have permission. Mr. Zuber stated that perhaps the Police Department could assist in funding this program.

Mr. Schlegel noted the importance of the security/park ranger program in the future if fees increase. He noted the problem with trash collection at fields and parks when barrels are only emptied weekly. Mr. Zuber described the “Can It” program initiated by Wood to Wonderful. He stated that personnel issues prevent the trash from being collected more often.

Mr. DeGroote questioned if Alvernia would be maintaining the Angelica fields. Mr. Zuber stated that it would be a joint effort.

Mr. Schlegel suggested that youths at playground programs be given constructive outlets for their art instead of relying on graffiti. He stated that he has approached an artist at the Goggleworks regarding this issue. Mr. Zuber noted the success of the mural program through Wayne Cockrell and Reading Beautification. Mr. DeGroote also noted the success of the Olivet mural program.

Old Business

- **10 Year Plan**

Mr. Smith stated that it is time to begin working on the 10 year plan. He stated that much of the current plan has been accomplished.

Mr. Zuber questioned if the Committee would be working on the plan or a consultant. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that the Ordinance creating the Committee states that it is their responsibility. She read the section pertaining to the 10 year plan.

Mr. DeGroote suggested utilizing funding from the United Way or the Community Foundation to allow the involvement of a local college to assist the Committee. He stated his belief that if the Committee facilitated the focus groups, discussions may become skewed.

Mr. Schlegel questioned if a “Friends of the Parks” would be possible in Reading. This could help increase donations and funding for parks.

Mr. DeGroote questioned if a newsletter was still produced for City recreation opportunities. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that she was unsure. She suggested utilizing students at the Career and Technology Center to keep printing costs at a minimum.

Mr. Schlegel suggested selling advertising to offset the costs so that the newsletter could be professionally produced and resemble a magazine similar to the one produced for Exeter.

There was a discussion of printing needs and costs.

There was a discussion of recreation needs on the City’s website. A link from the school district site to the City recreation site was discussed.

New Business

- **Multi-Municipal Recreation Facilities and Programs**

Mr. Smith informed the Committee that he attended this program. He noted the increased importance of networking within an area between facilities and municipalities. He stated that DCNR is placing increased weight on projects which include cooperation. The involvement of the school district is crucial as they have direct contact with the youth and many facilities. He stated that the ultimate goal is to decrease duplication of services.

Mr. Zuber and Mr. DeGroote noted their work to coordinate programming between the City recreation department and Olivet. Mr. DeGroote stated that their goal is to reach out to more youths and not to compete.

Mr. Smith continued that a school superintendent who was a presenter at the program noted that if the school board is not recreation-minded that they will not be receptive. He stated that the Committee needs to work with the district to encourage their participation.

Mr. DeGroote noted the positive attributes of Jim Washington, a candidate for Reading School Board. He also noted the instability of the Reading athletic department. He described a girl’s softball program run by the Olivet which has now created more middle school teams. He stated his belief that these types of programs will greatly enhance the district’s sports programs. He noted the recent success of a girl’s basketball league at 3rd & Spruce and that this team won the tournament at Albright.

Mr. DeGroote noted his belief that cooperation with the school district and the YMCA would increase opportunities for youth and is key to continuing recreation. He also noted the importance of funding through the United Way. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that she will contact the representatives from the YMCA, United Way and school district and encourage them to begin attending meetings.

Other Business

- **Summer programs**

Mr. DeGroote reported that summer programs are currently being planned. He described the baseball program through the Olivet which has 150 applicants. These youth will receive a glove, if they do not have one, and a uniform.

- **Lights at Schlegel**

Mr. Schlegel reported that he has had discussions with Marty Mayes, Community Development Director, regarding the possible installation of lights at Schlegel ball field. He stated that he has heard neighbors have been complaining about the use of lights at Pendora. Mr. Smith explained that the complaints are only if the lights remain on late into the night or are not turned off during the overnight hours.

Mr. Schlegel stated that he has a possible sponsorship of lights at Schlegel through the Reading Softball Association. He noted the possible installation of fencing as well.

Motion was made by Mr. Schlegel, seconded by Mr. DeGroote, to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

The next meeting of the PARC will be held on Tuesday, May 19 at 5:30 pm at Pendora Fieldhouse.

Respectfully submitted

*Shelly Katzenmoyer,
Deputy City Clerk*

Issues for follow up:

- Lantern Parade
- Volleyball
- Skateboard Park
- Dog Park
- Jogging trails
- Checkerboard tables
- Adult exercise/yoga
- Hockey – roller/deck
- Mural program